THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

August/September 2024 ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***

The Pilgrim's Path

by Claire Schaeffer-Duffy,

"Pilgrims are men who choose to serve God and honor the saints, and for the sake of this, they leave their parents and their towns, their wives, their houses, and all they own, and they travel to distant lands injuring their bodies and spending their savings in search of sanctuaries."

– Alphonse X, the Wise

There is something oddly macabre about walking close to 500 miles with a pack on your back, and sleeping in foreign villages, towns, and cities just to see the burial site of a beheaded saint. Yet that is what Scott and I did this spring, joining millions of Christians and non-believers alike who have done so ever since Alphonse the Second, a ninth-century Asturian king, gave his imprimatur to a shepherd's claim that the body of the apostle James lay buried in a field of stars off the northwestern coast of Spain.

I knew I wanted to walk the pilgrim's path some fifteen years ago, after I saw "The Way," Emilio Estevez's movie about the Camino Santiago. The war-making at home and abroad has only intensified since then. Of late, I have felt the need for renewal of vision. When a donation from a generous friend made my Camino aspiration possible, Scott and I began planning. Best to do this now while we are still physically able, we thought.

On the road, we daily consulted John Brierley's **A Pilgrim's Guide to the Camino de Santiago**, a practical book packed with spiritual insights. Having it in hand felt like traveling with a wise, old friend. With one exception, we followed its template for walking the Camino's French route in thirty-three stages, or days.

Medieval pilgrims found guidance in the *Codex Calixtinus*, an anthology of details and advice about the Camino that twelfth

century French scholar Aymeric Picaud reportedly compiled. It informed travelers about what relics to venerate, sanctuaries to visit, bad food and commercial scams to avoid, and which rivers coursed with healthy waters. The Salt Stream outside Lorca, for example, was lethal. One had to beware the two Navarrese men who sat on its riverbank sharpening their knives "waiting to skin the horses of pilgrims which die after drinking the water." As for the ferrymen of the Basque region, Picaud advised extreme caution. Those scoundrels were known to overload their flimsy boats with pilgrims, then steal their belongings if they drowned. He was convinced the ferrymen, along with

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A Blessed Journey

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

I'm sitting next to my wife, Claire, in Spain's beautiful Cathedral Santiago de Compostela not long after we completed the nearly 500-mile pilgrimage from Saint Jean Pied de Port, France, to this sanctuary where Saint James the Apostle, an early Christian martyr, is buried.

Tradition says Saint James preached the Gospel at the Druid center in Finistere on Spain's northern coast. Afterwards, he returned to Jerusalem where King Herod had him beheaded. The apostle's supporters interred his body in Finistere, but a Druid queen, supported by Roman soldiers, came to desecrate it. In the nick of time, Christians removed the body and headed inland. Their pursuers would surely have caught them had a bridge over a high valley not miraculously collapsed after the Christians crossed it. The Christians re-interred Saint James' remains in Santiago where they have lain ever since.

For over a thousand years, pilgrims have walked to Santiago to venerate the saint and to pray for their intentions. They take many routes, from various countries, but the most popular and ancient begins in Saint Jean Pied de Port in southern France, crosses the Pyrenees, the meseta in central Spain, and more mountains in Galicia, going through cities like Pamplona, Burgos, and Leon, tiny villages, fields, and forests. Saint Francis of Assisi is one of the millions who walked the route. In recent years, even though organized religious expression is declining, more and more people from all over the world are coming to complete what has come to be called

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the "vicious toll collectors" in southern France, who demanded exorbitant fees from unsuspecting pilgrims, were part of a racket involving the King of Aragon and his rich associates. Picaud was incensed that the local priests, "who know exactly what's going on," still gave these extortionists the Eucharist and confession.

"Until these men make good their crimes and start taking only fair tolls, they should be excommunicated in such a way that it's heard not only in their local churches but also in the basilica of Santiago with the pilgrim's listening," he wrote.

No one skinned our horses or exacted exorbitant tolls. Aside from the blisters and shin splints Scott endured, we walked in good health and at the end of each day, always found comfortable accommodations at the alberques (hostels) along the route. "The infrastructure for pilgrims has exploded in the past ten years," Brad, a Canadian writer, told me. It was not always this way. When he first walked the Camino back in 1989, he slept in barns, and in a dentist office one night which is what the villagers offered. Some days, he didn't find an open café until four in the afternoon. I suffered no such deprivation, thank God. The Camino's omnipresent baristas were so essential to my pilgrimage, I composed an irreverent ode in their honor one afternoon while ferocious for caffeine: "It is you, not God, we seek as we trudge the white-graveled *senda* / Searching every village entrance for the flares of your café umbrellas . . . ."

May 18: *Halfway to Pamplona: Sitting in the sun, I am reminded summer will come. A lizard has just skittered across the stone bench, a beautifully formed being with an elegant nose and spidery tail. While on the trail, I sang with Nadia and Sylvie, a Taizé chant, "Jesus, remember me when you come into Your Kingdom.'" On the back of the door to a bathroom stall at this rest stop, another message: "Stay. Your story is not over."*

There were mornings in Navarre when I thought I had entered a Renoir painting. Red poppies bordered fields of spring wheat rippling silver in the sunlight, and the hillsides were patched with more hues of green than I could name. Saint Bonaventure believed Creation is our first Bible. Being creatures of five senses, we initially perceive God in the natural world. To walk a place, rather than fly over, or drive through it, allowed time to catch the local revelations: the unruly glory of wildflowers, the prehistoric clatter of frogs, the companionship of mountains silhouetted on the northern horizon, continents of moss carpeting stone walls along the road.

Our pace was animal-friendly, slow enough to catch the jangle of cow bells and the roosters fussing as we strolled into a village in the desolate afternoon hour. Four days into the journey, I spotted my first stork. "Oh we have so many of those in my country," a Hungarian pilgrim,said dismissing the mysterious, gangly birds as if they were pigeons.

May 26: *En route to San Juan. Valle is walking through her shin splints. She is in such pain, she used her poles to walk to the bathroom last night. Yet here she is on the path today. "God is pushing me,"she says. "God is pushing all of us." I did not feel so driven when I woke this morning. I fretted about my knees which are always soft with swelling at the end of the day. An Australian woman, who slept in our dorm, is beset with plantar fascitis. She is in excruciating pain, barely able to lift her problematic foot. She tried resting a couple of days, going shorter distances. Nothing alleviates. She may have to give up the Camino.*

Spain is a convivial country. During the siesta hours, the Spaniards crowd their tavernas to be with one another. And in the churches, Jesus is rarely alone. You sometimes have to look hard to locate Him, usually seated on His Mother's lap, amid a throng of saints, prophets and chubby angels rolling their eyes heavenward.

The Virgin Mary, however, is omnipresent. Crowned with flowers or gold, veiled or bareheaded, statues of her adorn the altar, naves, and side chapels of every church, most of which are named Santa Maria. She is invoked a hundred times in the rosaries uttered before every Mass. It is her image imprinted on the stringed medallion the kind nun placed around my neck at the roadside hermitage to Our Lady.

"Is it like this in your country?" I asked Jan, a Croatian pilgrim. "Very much so. We have an old joke in Croatia that says every prayer begins with 'Dear God, could you please ask Mary to. . . .'"

June 2: *Sahagun. Whenever I note the ferocity of the wind across the meseta, Klaus, an 80-year-old pilgrim from Germany reminds me it is coming from behind us, an East to West wind, blowing us forward. As I passed him coming into*

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Arabs, Jews, and Medicine

by Murray Watnick, M.D.

Editor's Note: The author was a temporary advisor to the World Health Organization. He volunteered several years ago at Israel's Hospital of the Western Galilee with mostly Palestinian physicians, nurses, and technologists. In his medical career, he has worked with Muslims from Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, and Iraq, all dedicated to providing good medical care. Although it was written before the current fighting in Israel and Gaza, the article is printed now because its respectful and cooperative spirit is still relevant and needed in the war-torn Holy Land, where medical care is now decimated.

Reading the newspapers at the present time, one can only hope that Israeli-Arabic efforts at achieving peace in the Middle East somehow approximate the success of another cooperative effort about a thousand years earlier. This was also a precarious time for humanity, and more specifically, the entire sphere of medical knowledge. The Roman Empire had fallen and the entire Greco-Roman medical tradition was threatened with extinction. Arabic domination of large segments of land bordering the Mediterranean had taken place. Anxious to preserve Greco-Roman medical knowledge, the Arabs relied on Jewish physicians to transmit this tradition to them, largely through translation of Greek medical works, mainly Hypocrites. Similar to the role that the English language enjoys today, Arabic was the prime language of intellectuals in the early Middle Ages and was used to translate the ancient Greek works.

The Arabs were quick to utilize the knowledge and skills of the Jewish physicians. The Caliphs recognized the importance of employing skilled physicians in an age when poisoning was a prime mode of assassination, an excellent knowledge of antidotes being essential for survival. An outstanding Jewish physician of this age was Isaac Judaeus (845-940 A.D.) who served at the court of the Fatimide Caliph at Kairwan

in North Africa. An oculist, he was best known for his book on fever. One of his disciples became one of the great Arab physicians of the day. Arab physicians in their turn made important contributions and taught Jews. Moses ben Maimonides [a Sephardic rabbi and philosopher who became one of the most prolific and influential Torah scholars of the Middle Ages] received early education in Spain from Arab masters, and he significantly influenced the writings of the great Muslim physicians Avicenna and Avenzoar. He later served as body physician at the court of the Sultan of Egypt, Saladin.

Fielding H. Garrison, in his **Introduction to the History of Medicine**, stated that all important aspects of medical thought were in the hands of Jewish and Arabic physicians in the period before the first great European medical school at Salerno. From this academy, medical knowledge spread rapidly throughout Europe, an accomplishment that would not have been possible without the link to the past provided by Arab and Jewish physicians and scholars.

One thousand years later, Arabs and Jews are still engaging in cooperative efforts in the field of medicine despite four wars in the Middle East. Dr. Alfred Soffer recently described the amazing efforts of Palestinian and Israeli physicians, working together to provide adequate medical care for Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip and northern Sinai. The efforts, begun in 1968 after the Six Day War, managed to go on in earnest despite the intrusion of the Yom Kippur War in 1973. Medical seminars and continuing education courses are currently being conducted in Gaza City through the auspices of the University of Tel-Aviv. Modern medical care has also reached out to remote bedouin camps in the Sinai desert. Medical cooperation between Arab and Jew has been quietly and unobtrusively going on in Israel since the establishment of the State in 1948 and is accepted as a matter of fact. In the US, many Jewish and Arab physicians have had the privilege of working together as interns, residents, and fellow clinicians. Other examples could be provided.

Hopefully this long proven spirit of cooperation in medicine will some day spill over into the political area. Perhaps lasting peace will only come when Arab and Jewish physicians become heads of their respective political entities, carrying on the dialogue they have already had as fellow clinicians. It's only a thought. Ω

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the city, he said, "I am very happy. The Camino, the flowers, the morning. I am very happy in this day.' And I had thought he might be lonely.

We walked through layers of Catholic history with its wild stories and maddening contradictions. Saint Eulalia was one of many virgin martyrs of the early church honored along the Camino. She was twelve or thirteen when she refused obeisance to the Roman authorities and their gods. Eulalia taunted her torturers as they flailed her flesh then burned her at the stake. As she expired, white birds flew from her mouth, frightening her executioners. Their names are forgotten, but Eulalia is memorialized in one of the last churches pilgrims frequent before reaching Santiago. Prior to the Saint James'story, her tale was used to galvanize Christians in battles against Muslim rule.

Church militant was evident along the Camino. But overwhelmingly, we witnessed Church generous. The monastic legacy of providing unconditional hospitality to the wayfarer lives on along the route albeit in new forms. The God of Love outlasts the God of War.

Don't imagine pilgrims as a pious bunch. On the road, bodily needs and desires prevail. Early in the walk, I thought the Camino was nothing more than a pub run for the Irish who, upon arriving in a village, were always the first to locate the café and get their mugs of beer. I still don't know why the man at the alberque in Belorado needed to clear his throat for *twenty minutes* when he brushed his teeth. Walk together, snore together, with people, and masks drop, a softening occurs. We are indeed merely mortal and so dependent on one another.

June 12: *Walking to Triacastela. We left the mountaintop village with its congenial priest and walked through cloud cover. Through a barn door, I could hear the muted jingle of cowbells. God is love, the priest had said. God is love. Mist, like sunlight, outlines a landscape, accentuating what is in near view. Maybe the near view is all we need to see. A gaggle of Bucknell students pass me on the path singing songs from current musicals. I catch a few lines of their songs: "Let it go'" . . "We are where we are meant to be." They barrel by. The sight of them plowing forward into the mist reminds me of my own limited time on the planet. This brings tears to my eyes.*

"What if there is no transformation? " I confided to the priest in Rabanal."What if after all this travel, and all this walking, I go home unchanged, the same Claire?" The priest advised I seek the intercession of St. James who was "an intimate friend of Jesus," a witness to his transfiguration on the mountaintop, present in the garden of Gethesamane, and among the first martyrs. He also advised I remember what the Camino had taught me — the value of our relationships and a shared life, and that I had the capacity to overcome obstacles. The hardships of walking so many miles had shown me that.

A week after our return home, Scott and I drove to my brother's house in Shelburne Falls. The ride out Route 122 was lovely. Somewhere beyond the town of Petersham, I began computing the number of days needed to walk the distance we would travel that evening. "If Michael's house is seventy miles, that would take four days. Four times 15 is sixty miles.You'd then have to add another 2.5 to each day."

"Those would be long days," Scott said. Ω

I Said I Loved You and I Wanted Genocide to Stop

Editor's Note: Thew following is an excerpt from a poem collaboratively written by seventy writers in memory of Jamaican-American poet June Jordan.

We say good night and we want all of us to make it until tomorrow.

We say good morning and
want you to be alive.

We say good morning and
want everyone to eat.

We say these are unprecedented times and want unprecedented love to meet them.

We say we want the genocide to end - and we mean it.

We say ceasefire now and want you to know that's the bare minimum.

We say ceasefire and want olive trees too big to wrap our arms around.

We say none of us are free if Palestine is not free and everyone is able to see.

We say now and want sooner than now.

We say we all have a right to be here and that means the mangroves, and the coral and the parrot fish too.

We say we want to be free and
want you to be free too.

We say we love each other and
want genocide to stop.

We say another world is possible ,and we want no wars, no NATO, no borders, no America, no thirsty child dying hungry beneath the rubble.

WE SAY WE LOVE HARD AND WANT KILLERS TO STOP KILLING. Ω

Journey

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the Camino de Santiago, the Way of Saint James.

For Claire and me, the 34-day pilgrimage has been a compilation of physical challenge, spiritual reflection, natural beauty, and comradeship. We met pilgrims from 37 countries, not one of them unkind or disrespectful of others, including the Frenchman whom I mistook for Claire in the early morning darkness when I said, "Good morning, my sweet rose."

We climbed steep mountains, inched down treacherous declines, crossed seemingly endless plains, and hiked through forests so lush they could easily have prompted fairy tales. Many pilgrims, including me, got blisters. Others suffered illnesses or injuries which caused them to take rest days, seek medical help, or give up the Camino altogether. We met some who returned months or even years after an injury thwarted their first attempt. People complete the Camino at whatever pace they desire without judgment or pressure. They come back, not out of guilt, but out of desire.

I must admit that, many times, the daily hikes of 12 to 22 miles were daunting. We were eternally grateful to arrive at one of hundreds of pilgrim's hostels, called alburques in Spanish, where we paid as little as nine dollars for bunks in a clean dormitory with hot showers and a space to hand-wash and line-dry our clothes. We were twice blessed to stay in "donativos," hostels which offered a pilgrim dinner, bed, bath, and breakfast for a free-will offering. The staff at these remarkable places consisted of previous pilgrims who returned as volunteers to joyfully serve first-timers like us.

In one isolated stretch on a hot day, we came upon a group of young men and women offering an incredible array of fruit and other food, free for the taking. Another spot, with similar sustenance, had a sign at the entrance saying, "Welcome Home," and volunteers serving coffee and cold drinks as if we were expected and honored guests. As Catholic Workers, we want to sink their lavish hospitality into our hearts, so we can welcome guests with greater enthusiasm and ease.

Each day, before sunrise, pilgrims rose, dressed, donned their packs, and set out. In ways, it was like a marathon that takes place over and over and over. On the Camino, we saw flowers that evoked Monet paintings and exotic plants that seemed to come straight out of Dr. Seuss books. We saw breathtaking churches, lovely chapels, pious hermitages, and Knights Templar castles. We made close friendships with pilgrims who shared the journey, the hopes, and gifts.

There is no set reason for undertaking the Camino. Many, if not most, do not set out with religious intent, but the Camino, with its long solitary stretches and spectacular scenery, invites pilgrims to reflect on their lives, to commit to new careers, and to make positive changes.

We met a 75-year old American named Tim in Molinesca who, after he completed the Camino five years ago, went home, sold his business, and moved to Spain where he now greets pilgrims at Molinesca's mediaeval church. He told us, "I was not a nice man, ruthless in business," but now he feels free and more alive. So moved was Tim by the Camino that he changed his will, adding a stipulation that all eight of his children have to complete the pilgrimage in order to inherit anything after Tim's death.

As a long distance runner who considered himself pretty fit, I was disabused of my prideful assumption that the Camino would be easy. I was taken down a few pegs by Mike, an 81-year-old from Arkansas, who planned to complete the Camino and then bus back to Pamplona to run with the bulls. I also marveled at how many pilgrims never made a reservation for a place to lay their heads. They literally trusted in God's providence and were never disappointed. Unlike participants in a road race, every pilgrim on the Camino was valued, regardless of their purpose or approach.

Last night, thirteen of our newfound Camino family, celebrating the journey's end at one of Santiago's outdoor cafés, saw a Danish father with his 14-year-old twin sons come into the city. We met them often along the way, but witnessing the father and sons at the finish line spurred us into unanimous applause. The boys beamed with delight. The proud father asked us to repeat the gesture so he could film it. We cheered even louder.

Defying the adage, "Familiarity breeds contempt," the arduous journey drew us closer to each other. We shared many meals and laughed heartily at our misadventures. Claire and I believe it deepened our love and respect for each other too.

At the end of today's Mass, eight maroon-robed men used sturdy ropes to raise and swing an enormous incense censor over the entire congregation.

The sweet smell filling the huge cathedral has been deployed for centuries to mask the smell of sweaty pilgrims, but, more importantly, to overwhelm the stench of sin. As I witness the smoke envelope the enormous space and saw all the faces looking up in awe, I remember how virtually every time I asked someone why they decided to hike the Camino, they had optimistic replies: to change, to stop living lives of mindless conformity, or, as Henry David Thoreau proposed, "to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

Ultimately, the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela is a journey of hope that we are not condemned to repeat the same mistakes *ad nauseum*. In community with others, powered by grace, human beings can overcome loneliness, indifference, greed, prejudice, and, perhaps, even war. The smoke rising inevitably to the cathedral's highest point underscores this hope.

Thanks be to God for the gift of this pilgrimage! Thanks be to God, indeed. Ω

Effects of Climate Change Intensify in Parched East Africa, Study Finds

Editor's Note: This article, which ran in The New York Times, *April 27, 2023, struck one of our readers as still pertinent. We agree. Too often, Americans measure climate change proposals in terms of short-term inconvenience rather than urgently-needed action to save lives.*

Two and a half years of meager rain have shriveled crops, killed livestock and brought the Horn of Africa, one of the world's poorest regions, to famine's brink. Millions of people have faced food and water shortages. Hundreds of thousands have fled their homes, seeking relief. A below-normal forecast for the current rainy season means the suffering could continue.

Human-caused climate change has made droughts of such severity at least 100 times as likely in this part of Africa as they were in the preindustrial era, an international team of scientists said in a study released Thursday. The findings starkly illustrate the misery that the burning of fossil fuels, mostly by wealthy countries, inflicts on societies that emit almost nothing by comparison.

In parts of the nations hit hardest by drought — Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia —climate hazards have piled on top of political and economic vulnerabilities. Ω

Letters

Dear Claire and Scott,
News of your upcoming sojourn on the Camino has reached us. Wanting to clarify, just a bit, the news of your travels to our neighbors, we thought to step beyond your modest approach (praying and walking 500 miles) to the Camino and tell our friends that you would, in fact, be jogging the entire route, and carrying only an extra pair of socks, a begging bowl, and water bottle. And deciding to live on the Camino as Catholic Workers, begging for food and shelter at each day's end. You'll meet wonderful strangers soon to become friends, as you find space in their tents or on the floor of a hostel, sharing whatever evening meal they had planned. And jogging a modest 4-5 miles an hour for an eight-hour day, with Sunday off for Mass, relaxation, and recreation, you'll probably finish the Camino in less than two weeks! Can't wait to read stories of your venture.

Paul Frazier
Arkport Catholic Worker
Arkport, New York

Editor's Note: Would that we were half as holy and fit as Paul imagines. We did meet an Irishman trying to complete the Camino in 12 days and others who trusted entirely in God's providence for lodging.

Greetings, Claire & Scott,
Welcome back to the colonies.

As the unofficial "keepers of things holy and true in the Catholic Worker tradition," you two deserved a vacation.

A recent CW newsletter announced they have an instagram account. Instagram? owned by Meta Platforms!

This makes me wonder if the readership of CW papers has forgotten the efforts by Peter Maurin to promote symposia on personalist democracy. Starting in 1938, Maurin brought together the likes of Roger Baldwin, A.J. Muste, and Rabbi Eugene Kohn to educate the population.

Kohn: "To such an extent does mechanism dominate our whole culture that we are often disposed to think of all nature as a vast machine, an organization of power and nothing more. Ideals seem

illusionary, consciousness itself a mere recording of the pressure of blind forces. In the cosmos we hear the whirl of the engine rather than the music of the spheres." (from Marc Ellis' book, **Peter Maurin: Prophet of the Twentieth Century**, p. 118).

We both know how difficult it would be to make, from scratch, pencils and paper. Don't write me off as an idealist nut. I've had surgery and was glad the knife was sharp. But — instagram?

Lou Dyte

Editor's Note: As more and more people, especially young people, embrace technological advances, the Catholic Worker risks losing connection with them if we do not innovate. While we love calligraphy, we also rejoice that the printing press made communication easier. New technology, if wisely chosen, can help us, in Maurin's words, "create a world where it is easier to be good."

Dear Claire and Scott,
I'm writing to thank you for the latest *Catholic Radical,* especially the moving Gaza history and poems, the troubling piece about Saint Vincent Hospital, and your heartening cover story about the "reasonable" cost of clean energy.

I also write to wish you a fruitful, enjoyable, and not too challenging experience on the Camino de Santiago. Spurred on by Craig Simpson's reality-based encouragement and your own adventurous spirits, I know you can both do it! So, with 52 Mason Street in the trusty care of Sam and Brian while you're away, *buen viaje*!

Mike Moran
Palmer, Massachusetts

Dear Editors,
Dana Sajdi's article, "Gaza History," is a huge service to the community.

We need a similar piece scrutinizing the actions of the PLO and Hamas leaders who are killing Israeli children.

I've been disappointed by the message of some Catholic Worker communities and peace groups calling for a cease-fire in the Middle East. They have been highlighting the sins of Prime Minister Netanyahu's Likud Party while ignoring the duplicity of the PLO & Hamas.

I believe that the Catholic Worker message calling for an end to the violence in the Middle East is for **all** the Israeli and Palestinian children being killed by the stupidity of their respective governments and ours.

Gene Roman
New York, New York

Editor's Note: As Catholic Workers we believe the Gospel calls us to total nonviolence. Secular society has tried to restrain the horrors of war by, among other things, making it a war crime to target civilians with indiscriminate weapons, but we do not subscribe to the notion that war can be civilized.

In the multiple visits we have made to Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza, we have witnessed enormous state violence against Palestinians. We have also seen Palestinian teenagers throwing rocks at soldiers. On one trip, we prayed at the ruins of a pizza parlor where, the day before, a Palestinian suicide bomber killed sixteen people, including seven children and a pregnant woman. When Orthodox Jewish students and Palestinian teens began throwing rocks at each other in East Jerusalem, Chris Douçot, of the Hartford Catholic Worker, got in between them to plead for peace.

While we recognize that decades of systemic violence by US-backed Israeli soldiers and settlers demands resistance, we reject retaliatory violence. Violent attacks by Hamas or the PLO not only fail to adhere to Christ's call to love the enemy, they provoke disproportionate reprisals and fuel the myth that both sides are equally responsible for the conflict.

Nonetheless, we reject the notion that violence of the oppressed can be equated to state violence. Palestinian sling shots, suicide bombs, small arms, and rockets, cannot inflict anywhere near the harm than Israeli tanks, planes, and enormously destructive bombs do. We also bear in mind that, when our own government funds one side in a conflict to the tune of 3.8 billion dollars annually, opposition to that killing takes precedence.

As in all circumstances, we struggle to remember that all parties in this conflict are, like us, children of a loving God. It is extremely difficult to bear this in mind after someone says and does atrociously hateful things, but it remains true. Our challenge is to discover effective ways to call our wayward siblings back into communion with the rest of the human family.

Catholic Worker Calendar

August 6 - Vigil For Nuclear Disarmament: Please join us on the 79th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan. Lincoln Square, Worcester, 3:30-4:30 PM.

August 14 & 28, September 11 & 25— Evening Prayer: Please join us for prayer and Taizé chant at 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow. 7:00 PM.

August 25 - Camino de Santiago Slideshow: Please join Claire & Scott Schaeffer-Duffy for a presentation on their pilgrimage from Saint Jean Pied de Port, France to Santiago, Spain. Blessed Sacrament Church's Phelan Center, 551 Pleasant Street, Worcester. 2 PM. An additional presentation will be offered at 52 Mason Street on September 18 at 7 PM. Refreshmentsat both events.

Mason Street Musings

While the Schaeffer-Duffys were on pilgrimage in Spain, my wife Sam and I house-sat here on Mason Street. We're both on a journey of our own toward starting a Catholic Worker farm and eco-village in central Massachusetts called Makarioi (from the Greek word that opens all the Beatitudes). This was a great opportunity to support the great work of Saints Francis & Thérèse house, while learning, practicing, and building a community of our own.

Scott and Claire have worked out a formula of balance that makes communal life and hospitality sustainable. It involves balancing compassion and clear and healthy boundaries, care for others with self-care, and balancing prayer, hospitality, and social justice in a way that none overwhelms the other or their practitioners. Practicing this balance ourselves has prepared us well for our next communal experience.

Gratitude has also been something we've had a chance to practice repeatedly during our time. We have been extremely thankful to the volunteer cooks, including Elsie, Kate, Jo, Mike, Mohammed, and my father, Mat who helped share the burden of providing daily meals for our guests. We are also thankful for our three guests, who did everything possible to make it easy for us – cleaning, taking out the recycling, taking in the mail, and despite our best efforts to continue the house practice of cleaning up ourselves, doing dishes! And we have immense gratitude for Scott and Claire who put their trust in us to take care of the house and continue the work in their absence.

Grace Duffy

Most of al, this experience has been an exercise in trusting God and God's call to us. We had a nice apartment in Leicester before this journey began, but we've known for some time that we're being called to something less conventional and more communal. It was a leap of faith to surrender the keys to our apartment, but a leap we would make again without hesitation. Even as we continue to figure out our next stop in this journey, we have only grown in confidence in this call and our trust in the divine to open the right doors, remove obstacles as needed, and guide our path.

We think Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin were not only saints, but prophets. Their call and example of community, nonviolence, and poverty in a culture obsessed with individualism, violence, and money was profound in their time, but truly indispensable in ours. It seems those obsessions have now brought us to the edge of crises in climate, government, economics, and more. Peter Maurin said the purpose of the Catholic Worker is to "create a new society in the shell of the old." The world needs this new society now more than ever and we know we are called, along with many others, to help manifest it, even if the steps to doing so are often obscured by fog. What we do know is that each time we take a step toward following this call, including by housesitting these past weeks, the path has become a little more clear, communal living a little less hard, and uncertainty a little less scary, and so, we will keep walking forward one step at a time. Ω

Brian

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